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OBSERVATIONS
O N
Several ACTS of PARLIAMENT,
P A S S E D
In the Fourth, Sixth and Seventh Years
O F
HIS PRESENT MAJESTY'S Reign.

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OBSERVATIONS

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ON
Several Acts of PARLIAMENT, &c.

THE representative body of this people having very fully and repeatedly remonstrated against these acts, as unconstitutional, and as infringing the rights and privileges of the subject, it is unnecessary to add any thing upon that head ; but we shall confine our remarks to such parts of these acts as affect the trading interest.

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By these acts certain rates and duties are imposed on molasses, sugars, wine, tea, glass, paper, and many other articles commonly imported into the British colonies in America, and several leading articles which procured remittances to Great-Britain, are now either brought into the class of enumerated articles, or subjected to the duty, risque and expence of being landed in Great-Britain, which embarrassments on the trade of the colonies must greatly diminish, if not wholly destroy, several branches of it, and so far lessen the demand for British manufactures, great quantities of which are annually imported into this province (more than the amount of our exports to Great-Britain) for the payment of which we depend not only upon what is produced among ourselves, but also upon what is caught out of the sea, or is obtained by a circuitry of commerce abroad. To collect this revenue the government is at a very great expence, equal at least (and, including the charge of men of war and cutters to guard the coast, vastly superior) to all the revenue that could be collected, had our trade been as extensive as it

was

was before those acts were made; which is not the case now, and never will be, while they remain in force.

One principal branch of the trade of this province is the fishery carried on to the Banks, in which there are upwards of three hundred vessels employ'd, besides a great number of boats in the Bay, and about ninety sail in the mackarel fishery. The amount the fish these vessels cure, with the pickled fish and liver oil, is upwards of *one hundred and sixty thousand pounds* sterling per annum: about two-fifths of the Bank fish turns out merchantable, and is sent to Spain, Portugal and Italy, and the nett proceeds remitted to Great-Britain; the other three-fifths, being unfit for any market in Europe, is sent with the pickled fish and mackarel to the islands in the West-Indies: And as the English islands do not consume more than is made by the boats in the Bay, being about one-fifth, and one-fourth of the mackarel and pickled fish, the remaining two-fifths made by the Bankers, together with three quarters of the mackarel and pickled

fish, is carried to the French and other foreign islands, in return for which we receive molasses and some ordinary sugars.—This valuable branch of our trade, the fishery, almost, if not wholly, depends on our trade to the foreign islands in the West-Indies—As we cannot cure fish for the European markets separate from the other sort sent there, and as we have no other market for what is made by the Bankers, it will be lost if not sent to the foreign islands, and this loss must entirely destroy the whole Bank fishery.

Another considerable branch of the trade of this province is lumber of all kinds, also provisions, horses, and many other articles suitable for the West-India markets, in which trade there are upwards of an hundred and eighty vessels annually employed, most of which make two voyages in a year: These vessels call first at the English islands, and when they are supplied, the remainder is carried to the foreign islands.—A quantity of oak timber, staves, and other lumber is sent to Ireland, some to Madeira and the Western Islands, to purchase
I wines

wines, and some few cargoes are sent to Spain, Portugal and England, but none to any foreign port to the northward of Cape Finister.—The first cost of these cargoes of lumber being very small, the whole profits are not more than a bare freight for the vessels; but this freight is a great encouragement to ship-building, which is another considerable branch of trade in this province, wherein there have been upwards of three hundred sail built in a year, before the late embarrassments were laid on the trade, since which this number has been reduced at least two-thirds, and the tradesmen formerly employ'd in this branch of business are now obliged to procure a livelihood in some manufacture, or starve.—Some of these ships went directly to Europe with fish, oil, pot and pearl ash, naval stores and lumber, but the greatest part went to the West-Indies with lumber, fish, and other articles of our produce, the proceeds of which, with the freights from thence to England, together with the vessels, were remitted to Great-Britain, to pay for the goods we received from thence; and, by having timber plenty, and building so many vessels,

vessels, we became carriers for other parts of America. Besides the trade to the West-Indies, many of our ships formerly went to Virginia, North and South Carolina, where they carried large quantities of rum, to purchase rice, tobacco and naval stores, and took in freight for Great-Britain, where the proceeds of the whole (and indeed of all our trade) centers.

Another considerable branch of our trade is that carried on to Africa, where we send large quantities of New-England rum, not only for our own trade, but to supply the traders in ships from Great-Britain, with whom we exchange this commodity for other European articles brought out by them suitable for that trade, by means of which they are enabled to carry on their trade to greater advantage than they would otherwise do without this necessary article—And as the slaves purchased there are chiefly sold in the West-Indies for bills on London, the proceeds of this trade consequently are remitted to Great-Britain.

All

All these several branches of trade are greatly obstructed by the duties imposed, and the restrictions to which they are subjected by the aforementioned acts.—The duty on molasses, tho' reduced to one penny per gallon, which at first sight may appear but small, yet, as it is one tenth part of the value (when brought to market) is really large, and will be a discouragement to a trade which has insinuated itself into, and is a great spring to every branch of business among us.—The fishery, the lumber trade and ship-building, are greatly promoted by the importation of molasses, and distilling it into rum, and the trade to Africa wholly depends on this article; so that any act which hath a tendency to obstruct the importation of molasses, must be prejudicial to Great Britain.—The former acts, imposing duties on molasses, were intended only as a regulation of trade, and to encourage our own islands, and the duty was only on foreign molasses; but by these acts it is imposed on all molasses, and expressly for the purpose of raising a revenue.

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The duty of five shillings per hundred on brown, and twenty-two shillings on white sugars, is a great burden on our trade to the foreign islands: If we confine ourselves to molasses, a sufficient return'd cargo cannot always be obtained; and the aforesaid duties upon sugars are so heavy, as to render the import of them so unprofitable, that we cannot pursue a trade by which we disposed of the superfluous produce of our country.

By these acts we are restrained from exporting sugars to a foreign market, without first landing them in Great-Britain, or obtaining a licence from thence to carry them directly to a foreign market.—If we go first to Great-Britain, and land them there, it will prove so expensive, by the delay and charges of unloading and reshipping, and also of a double freight and insurance, that the trade cannot be carried on to any advantage, especially in a time of war.—If we carry these sugars directly to a foreign market, by licence from Great-Britain, the difficulties and embarrassments are still greater, as the vessel in which any sugars
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are to be shipped must first go to Great-Britain, and the master enter into bonds there, before a licence can be procured, during which the sugars are to remain in the King's stores here; and after they are delivered in a foreign port, the vessel must return to Great-Britain to cancel the bonds, before she can proceed on any other voyage.—Tho' the liberty granted to carry these sugars directly to foreign ports by licence, might be intended as an encouragement to the trade, the regulations and restrictions are such as will effectually defeat this very design: Whereas, if we were allowed to export these sugars (after being stored here under the care of custom-house officers) to foreign markets in our own vessels, free of duty, it would encourage the bringing them here, and in time might become a very considerable branch of trade; and in particular would enable us to employ our fish-ships to better advantage, as they carry no fish between decks, and consequently might be partly laden with sugars. But under the present regulations, none will ever be brought here in order to be exported to a fo-

reign market in Europe, either in our own vessels or any other.

Here it may be proper to observe, that should we be allowed the free importation of foreign sugars, even for own consumption, the trade of Great-Britain would not be injured, but greatly benefitted; for in this case, more of the sugars made in the English islands might be carried to Great-Britain, and what they did not consume would be exported from thence to foreign markets, which would employ a greater number of ships, and thereby increase the commerce of Great-Britain, without lessening that of the colonies—and all the sugars we procured from the French islands, and carried to foreign markets in Europe, must necessarily lessen their navigation, and increase that of Great-Britain.

Formerly we made considerable remittances to Great-Britain with sugars, the produce of the English islands, which we received in return for our own produce sold there: But by the act of the 6th of his present Majesty, we
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find such a distinction made in favour of our fellow subjects in the islands, that while they may import British plantation sugars into Great-Britain *as such*, that which is imported from North-America must be deemed *French*; by which means we are cut off from an article of export which hath been heretofore considerable, and might be so still, were it not for this regulation.

Logwood and mahogany have been, by a circuitry of trade, the means of large remittances to Great-Britain—these we have obtained by small cargoes of provisions produced among ourselves, together with some British manufactures, by which many of our vessels have been employ'd; but now, by being obliged to carry them first to England, such heavy expences will be incurred, by reason of their bulk, and the smallness of their value, as must put an end to this branch of business, and consequently the trade must fall into the hands of foreigners.

The reasons given for these regulations, as mentioned in the act of the 6th of George the Third, were “ the more effectually to
 “ prevent enumerated goods being privately
 “ carried from the British colonies, into foreign parts of Europe, in vessels that
 “ clear’d out with non-enumerated goods ;
 “ and also to prevent the clandestine importation of foreign European goods into said
 “ British colonies.” Upon the first of these reasons we would observe, that the great care and vigilance of the custom-house officers here might answer the purpose, and effectually prevent any such enumerated goods from being exported to foreign parts.—With respect to the second, it is difficult to conceive how the obliging a vessel to stop at England, upon an outward-bound voyage, can have any influence in preventing the importation of illicit goods upon her return, especially when sufficient care was before taken to prevent such illicit importation, by obliging all vessels that have any foreign goods on board, to stop at Great-Britain on their return.

Another

Another great embarrassment to the trade of the colonies, is the multiplicity of bonds required by the aforesaid acts of his present Majesty, in addition to the bond for enumerated goods, required by an act made in the 12th year of the reign of Charles the Second, the condition of which bond is, That such enumerated goods shall be landed either in Great-Britain, or some part of his Majesty's dominions: And by an act of the 4th of George the Third, coffee, piemento, cocoa, hides, skins, pot and pearl ash, and several other articles, are added to the list of enumerated goods—besides which, no master of a vessel is allowed to take in any non-enumerated goods, without first giving another bond, with one surety, the condition of which is, That none of said non-enumerated goods shall be landed in any port of Europe to the northward of Cape Finisterre, except in Great-Britain; by which we are excluded from carrying even non-enumerated goods to Ireland, without first calling at some port in Great-Britain. If any iron, or lumber, are laden on board any vessel, the master must

give

give a third bond, on the same condition as that required for non-enumerated goods ; and in case any rum is laden on board, a fourth bond is required, the condition of which is, That such Rum shall not be landed in the Isle of Man.

These bonds the officers of the customs, in this port, require for all vessels loading any of these articles, not only for such as are going to Europe, the West-Indies, and other colonies on the continent, but even for coasters going from one town to another in the same province, and sometimes for vessels under twenty tons, going to another town within the district of the same custom-house where the bonds are given ; so that no lumber can be brought from the place of its growth, in the eastern parts of this province, to this, or any other market, for exportation, until such bond is given, though no custom-house officer reside within forty or fifty, and sometimes one hundred miles of the place where the coaster takes in his lumber : This is a very great embarrassment to the trade of
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this province, in which there are a great number of vessels employ'd in the coasting business, and upwards of one thousand sail are annually enter'd and cleared at the several offices. This restriction appears the more unaccountable, as it is not known that one single vessel ever carried a cargo of lumber to any foreign port to the northward of Cape Finisterre. Had such a trade formerly been carried on, the coasting vessels are not capable of prosecuting such a voyage, and the charge of these bonds, and certificates to cancel them, amount annually to a very large sum.—Besides these several bonds, every master of a vessel, even a coaster, is obliged to take out a sufferance and cocket for every article laden on board; and in case he takes in any goods for which bond is required, he must have a certificate from the collector, of his having given bond for those articles; and in case he neglects taking such certificate, not only the goods for which bonds are required, but even the vessel and the rest of the cargo, are forfeited. This has been severely felt by some Traders here, who have lost both vessel

and cargo, to a very considerable value, only for want of such certificate, tho' the cocket for those goods mentioned that bonds were taken; but the certificate was either mislaid, or never delivered by the collector.—The sureties in these bonds are likewise greatly exposed, should the master neglect to send a certificate of the landing the goods for which he has given bonds, or should the collector refuse or disapprove of the certificate he may send, as being improper (tho' there should be no reason to suspect the goods were carried to any port they were excluded from) the sureties may be prosecuted in the court of admiralty, and obliged to pay considerable costs at least, if not the whole penalty, as has heretofore been experienced in that court, and is such an insupportable burden on trade, as will prevent many from engaging in it.

Before a cocket can be taken out for any goods, and some even of British manufacture, oath must be made, when, by whom, and in what vessel, the article intended to be exported

ported was imported; This, in many cases, is impossible, and will prevent some towns from being supply'd with such goods as they want, and induce others to set up manufactures of their own, and thereby lessen the consumption of British manufactures in the colonies, which must be severely felt by the manufacturers in Great-Britain.

Another great discouragement to the trade of America, is the unlimited power given to officers of the customs.—The act passed in the 4th year of George the Third ordains, That in case any information shall be commenced and brought to tryal in America, on account of the seizure of any ship or goods as forfeited, wherein a verdict shall be given for the claimer, the defendant, if the judge certifies that there was a probable cause of seizure, shall not be intitled to any costs of suit whatsoever—and further, in case an action shall be brought against any officer, for seizing any ship or goods, where no information shall be commenced, or brought to tryal to condemn the same, and a verdict

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shall be given against the defendant, the plaintiff, besides his ship or goods so seized, or the value thereof, shall not be entitled to above two-pence damages, nor to any cost of suit: But if the plaintiff shall be non-suited, or discontinue his action, or if judgment shall be given, upon any verdict or demurrer, against the plaintiff, the defendant shall recover triple costs. By these clauses in this act, and the power and extension of the courts of *Vice-Admiralty*, the whole trade of America lies at the mercy of the officers of the customs and judge of said court, the former being impower'd to seize the ships or goods of the American merchants at their pleasure; and though they never prosecute the same, or act ever so arbitrarily or unjustly, the merchant has no remedy, the officer not being subject to any damage, or even to cost of suit, while the distressed claimant, tho' ever so much injured, if he should be non-suited, or discontinue his action, must pay triple costs: And as the governor, as well as the officers of the customs and judge of the admiralty,

are interested in those seizures, it is natural to conclude they will always encourage and promote the same; and many instances may be produced, where both vessel and goods have been condemned as forfeited, only for a small mistake or neglect of the master, and the industrious trader thereby ruined; which severities are not exercised towards our fellow-subjects in Great Britain.

Since the appointment of a board of commissioners to reside in America, the restrictions and embarrassments on the trade have been greatly increased, by the attendance and delay in entering and clearing of vessels at the collector's office, where some masters have been obliged to wait two or three days, before they could obtain an entry or permit to unload: The many oaths and certificates required, before any vessel can be cleared out, have occasioned the same delay to our outward-bound vessels.

Another difficulty attending the entry of vessels, particularly from the West-Indies, is

the master's being required to make an exact report of their cargoes on their first arrival (even at any out-ports they may put into by contrary winds) and denying them liberty to make a post-entry.—In Great-Britain, the masters are allow'd to make reports from day to day, as they find any goods omitted; but this *justice* is denied the Americans, and the board of commissioners have publicly advertised, That no allowance, for the future, shall be made for mistakes or omissions in the first report, even for adventures belonging to the seamen. This is an hardship, or rather a cruelty, as the seamen frequently get aboard more than the masters are acquainted with, and as the masters purchase their molasses on shore in tierces, and shift it into other casks of their own when brought on board the vessel, and are often filling up those casks, it is sometimes difficult for them exactly to ascertain the number and contents of the casks they have filled.—The fees taken at the collector's office, particularly for coasters, and obliging them to enter and clear in the same manner as vessels bound on foreign voyages,

voyages, and to give bonds for every trifling article they carry for private families, even for a few pounds of tea or sugar, or a few gallons of rum or molasses purchased of retailers, for which they must produce certificates, on oath, in what vessel these trifles were imported, and by whom the duties were paid, which is often impossible, are such embarrassments on this branch of business, as, if continued, it must entirely destroy it.—Formerly the coasters were not required to take cockets for every trifling article, and the fees, both entering and clearing, was only *one shilling* sterling, whereas the expence now is from *ten shillings* to *sixteen shillings*, which is more ready money than they sometimes receive for their whole freight; and as they frequently take in only a few articles, the charge of clearing those articles at the custom-house is more than the freight.—The appointment of an almost incredible number of inferior officers, as tide-men, boatmen, waiters and others, and requiring the master to receive and lodge them under deck (without any authority to support it) is another cause of complaint—Some of
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those wretches are persons of such infamous characters, that the merchants cannot possibly think their interest safe under their care. —The liberty these fellows take, of searching vessels before they are discharged, and sometimes before the master's have reported at the custom-house, is not only illegal, but *impudent*, and contrary to the practice in Great-Britain, where the officers never search the hold of any vessel till the master says she is discharged, and desires the waiter to certify the same to the custom-house. Another intolerable grievance is the appointment of officers of the customs on board the men of war, cutters, and other armed vessels; the arbitrary, unlawful and wanton manner in which they have exercised this authority in this province, is unprecedented in any other part of the British dominions.

Some of these officers, by force of arms, have enter'd vessels on the high seas, and in the harbours, insolently demanded of the masters their papers, broke open their hatches, and search'd the hold with lighted candles ;
even

even ships from London, with hemp and powder on board, have been treated in this manner, and both the lives and properties of his Majesty's loyal subjects thereby greatly endanger'd.—Some vessels coming into this harbour, before the masters could reach the custom-house to make report, have been boarded by armed boats from the ~~Romney~~ Romney, commanded by Captain Corner: One vessel, from the West-Indies, had her hatches open'd, and twenty hog-heads of molasses hoisted upon deck, to search the hold: Another vessel, with lumber, was carried along-side the Romney, her hold unstowed, and the boards taken on board the king's ship, before the master was permitted to go to the custom-house to report: A vessel from Lisbon, bound to Marblehead, was boarded on the high seas by Mr. Panton, lieutenant of the Rose (who was likewise an officer of the customs) with a design to impress the seamen, who concealed themselves in the hold; upon which Mr. Panton assumed the custom-house officer, and pretended that

that he was going to search the vessel for uncustomed goods, and, under this pretence, enter'd the hold, and endeavour'd to impress the seamen, who stood upon their defence, and told the officer, upon his peril, not to enter the fore-hold; upon which they were fired upon, and one of the seamen was shot thro' his arm, and another wounded: This brought on an engagement, in which the lieutenant was killed, and the vessel brought out of her way, to Boston, by the man of war.—Several other vessels have been seized in the Bay, at the Vineyard, and other ports, (where they have been obliged, by contrary winds, to make a harbour) sent into ports they were not bound for, and there detain'd at a great expence, on the trifling pretence that some article (not on cargo, but belonging to the mariners) was found on board, not specified in the cockets.

Upwards of twenty sail of men of war, cutters, and other armed vessels, purchased by the board of Commissioners, have been employed

employed this year to cruize on the trade of this province, without discovering one vessel in an illicit trade, tho' their expectations were raised in hopes of plunder, by the unjust and cruel misrepresentations made by wicked and designing men. Some of the commanders of the king's ships purchased small vessels on their own accounts, and sent them into the little harbours and coves, where the men of war could not cruize; and some of these have been disguised as coasters, and every other method has been used, to detect a supposed contraband trade; even the master of a little cutter purchased a fishing boat, on his own account, for the same purpose: But being disappointed of the advantages which were expected to be reaped from the condemnation of illicit traders, or the prizes (as they call'd them) they have been induced to take advantage of the mistakes and omissions of the masters of coasting vessels, several of whom have been seized by those guarda costas, and two actually condemned for some trifles found on

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board, without being in the clearance.— They have indeed seized twenty-three other vessels, upon some trifling pretences, all of which have been dismiss'd, after being detain'd some time, at a considerable expence.—The fishery has likewise been greatly distressed by the guarda costas.— Many of our fishermen cure their fish at Canso, and other places in Nova-Scotia, at a great distance from any custom-house, and when the fishing season is over, they take in the fish they have cured on shore, and return home : This has been the practice ever since the fishery was carried on, till the passing of the late acts, and the appointment of officers of the customs on board the King's vessels, since which many of the fishing vessels have been seiz'd by these avaricious officers, and condemn'd in the court of admiralty, for taking in their dry fish without first having a permit from the custom-house, and giving the bond required for non-enumerated goods ; and the skippers of those vessels are now obliged to make two trips to Halifax or
Louisbourg,

Louisbourg, first to give bond and take a permit to load, and when they have taken in their fish, to procure a clearance to screen their vessels and fish from the jaws of these devouring monsters.

The Commissioners themselves (tho' by act of parliament they are not intituled to any share of the forfeitures) appear, by the whole tenor of their conduct, to have been more intent upon making seizures, than upon promoting the revenue; nor have they shewn the least disposition to serve the trade, but have taken every method in their power to embarrass it, by their directions to the collectors and other officers of the customs*, and by their employing persons of the most abandoned characters

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* On the 27th of October 1768, John Hancock, Esq; Mr. Lewis Gray, Capt. Daniel Malcom, Capt. John Matchet, and others, were libell'd for £. 9000 sterling each, and held to bail in £. 3000 sterling each, to appear at the court of Vice-Admiralty, on suspicion of their aiding and assisting at the landing a few pipes of wine, imported in the sloop Liberty, from Madeira, more than

under them, some of whom have acted in open violation of the laws; and one in particular,

than were reported at the custom-house. The libel against Mr. Hancock came on the 7th of November, when a vast number of witnesses were examined upon interrogatories in the tedious method of the civil law, and no proof appearing against him, the court was adjourn'd to the next week, and a new set of witnesses were produced and examined in the same manner, and to as little purpose; after which the court was several times adjourn'd, and other witnesses summoned, even Mr. Hancock's most intimate friends and acquaintance, so that a great part of the winter was taken up in attending on the court of admiralty, and examining those witnesses; and after every method had been tried, and no proof could be procured against him, in the spring 1769, on the publication of the new judge of admiralty's commission, Mr. Hancock was discharg'd from this vexatious and unprecedented libel.

The libels against Mr. Gray, and others, on the same account, were dismiss'd at the same time, without examining any witnesses in the case.

About the same time Capt. Malcom, Capt. Dorrington, and others, were libell'd for £. 2400 sterling each, and held to bail in £. 800 sterling, on suspicion of their assisting at the landing a few pipes of wine, suppos'd to be imported in the schooner Friendship, from the Western Islands; and as no evidences could be produced

particular, without the least provocation, fired upon the inhabitants, and by force of arms rescued a prisoner, taken by the King's writ, from the hand of justice.

The merchants and traders in the northern colonies, and more particularly in this province, have been greatly abused by the representations that have been made to Great-Britain, of their importing large quantities of the manufactures of France, Holland, Hambro' and other parts of Europe, in a clandestine manner, which are false and malicious: The merchants in this province carry on no trade with any part of France, except to their islands in the West-Indies; and no instance can be produced

produced to support the charge in these libels, they were all dismissed at the same time Mr. Hancock's was.

Other instances of the same kind of proceedings might be produc'd, but these will be sufficient to shew in what a cruel and vexatious manner the inhabitants of this province are treated by the Board of Commissioners.

duced of any quantity of manufactures being brought from thence. The goods imported from Holland and Hambro' are all enter'd in England, and the duties, to a considerable amount, annually are paid there.—When the duty upon molasses was sixpence sterling a gallon, as there was no appropriation made of that duty, it was well known in England the officers of the customs connived at the importation, and their conduct was not disapproved: How far this will justify such representations, is submitted to the impartial public—but since the duty on molasses has been reduced, the whole, tho' grievous, has been regularly paid.

The merchants do not desire liberty to import any kind of goods that are prejudicial to the manufactures of Great-Britain, nor have they ever yet complain'd of their trade being confin'd to Great-Britain for such goods as are manufactured there, so long as they might be imported duty free.

What

What the Colonists have a right to expect and hope for, is a repeal of all the acts imposing duties on any kind of goods imported into the British colonies for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, as being inconsistent with their rights as free subjects—the removal of every unnecessary burden upon trade, and that it be restor'd to the same footing it was upon before the act of the 6th of George the Second, commonly call'd the sugar-act—particularly,

That molasses, so necessary to promote every branch of trade, and likewise sugars, be admitted free of duty.

That the importation of wines from Madeira and the Azores may be permitted, agreeable to the act of the 15th of Charles the Second.

And as the free importation of fruit, wine and oil, direct from Spain and Portugal, would be a great encouragement of the fishery, and will no ways interfere with
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the manufactures of Great-Britain, and the obliging all vessels with those articles on board to call at some port in Great-Britain, being attended with great expence and delay; and as the acid of lemons and oranges is become almost necessary for the health and comfort of the inhabitants of North-America, and these fruits not being able to endure repeated transportation, it is hoped the direct importation of wine, oil, and fruit of all kinds, may also be permitted.

The taking off the duties on tea, paper, glass and colours, will not relieve the trade of the burdens it labours under—But should all the revenue acts be repealed, and the trade relieved from all unnecessary restrictions, and restor'd to the footing it was upon before the act of the 6th of George the Second, and the indulgencies now mentioned be granted, it would have a happy tendency to unite Great-Britain and her colonies on a lasting foundation—all clandestine trade would then cease—the great
 expence

expenditure of men of war, cutters, of the commissioners, and other custom-house officers lately appointed to secure the revenue, might be saved—The trade, navigation and fishery would not only be revived, but greatly extended; and, in that case, the growth of these colonies would be very rapid, and consequently the demand for British manufactures proportionably increased.

The foregoing observations relate wholly to the revenue acts, and the conduct of the custom-house officers; but we cannot conclude without mentioning the great expense and needless trouble accruing to the trade by means of the *Naval Office*.

Since the establishment of custom-houses, and the appointment of custom-house officers, this office is altogether unnecessary, and answers no valuable purpose.

Upon this head it is proper to observe, that soon after the settlement of these colo-

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nies, the parliament thought it necessary to take some measures for the regulation of the plantation trade. The act of the 12th of Charles the Second, for encouraging and increasing shipping and navigation, ordains what qualifications shall be necessary for vessels trading to the colonies, and enjoins *the Governor, or persons by him appointed*, to inspect and take care that the same be observed, and to take bonds for all vessels lading any of the commodities in said act enumerated.

Three years after, by the act of the 15th of the same reign, further regulations and restrictions were made, and every person or persons importing goods into the colonies obliged to deliver to *the Governor of such colony, or to such person or officer as shall be by him thereunto authorized or appointed*, a true inventory of all such goods, &c. At this time, and until ten years after, no duties were laid, by act of parliament, upon any commodities in the plantations, and of consequence no custom-houses had been erected,

erected, or collectors or other custom-house officers appointed or thought of in the colonies, but the whole care and inspection of trade remained with *the Governor, or the person he appointed Naval-Officer.*

—Afterwards, by the act of the 25th of the same reign, chap. 7. sect. 3. duties being laid on sugars and sundry other articles, to be paid in the plantations, when carried from one plantation to another, the several duties so imposed were to be levied and paid to such collector or other officer, in said plantations, as should thereafter be appointed by the commissioners of the customs in England; who did accordingly appoint collectors, and such other officers as occasion required, for that purpose, who ever since their appointment, it is well known, have had the chief care and inspection of the trade.

From this account of the matter, it appears that, as formerly there were no custom-houses or custom-house officers in America, the government thought proper to devolve the care and inspection of the
trade

trade upon the Governor of each colony, or such persons as they should appoint under them for that purpose, who have been called Naval Officers; that, upon the establishment of custom-houses and custom-house officers, the establishment of a naval-office, or the appointment of naval-officers, was rendered altogether needless. The original design of government, in the establishment or appointment of either, was, that the trade might be duly taken care of and inspected, that frauds might be prevented, and that abuses in trade might be regulated: All these purposes may be, and are, effectually answered by the appointment of collectors and other officers of the customs; therefore the naval-office is altogether useless. As it is a grievous burthen, and tends greatly to retard business, and is a needless expence, without any benefit to the government, or answering any one valuable purpose, we have just grounds of complaint; and cannot but hope this office will be dispensed with.

Upon the whole, the trade of America is really the trade of Great-Britain herself; the profits

profits thereof center there : It is one grand source from whence money so plentifully flows into the hands of the several manufacturers, and from thence into the coffers of landholders throughout the whole kingdom : It is, in short, the strongest chain of connection between Britain and the colonies, and the principal means whereby those sources of wealth and power have been, and are, so useful and advantageous to her. The embarrassments, difficulties, and insupportable burdens under which *this trade* has laboured, have already made us prudent, frugal and industrious, and such a spirit in the Colonists must soon, very soon, enable them to subsist without the manufactures of Great-Britain, the trade of which, as well as its naval power, has been greatly promoted and strengthened by the luxury of the colonies ; consequently any measures that have a tendency to injure, obstruct and diminish the American trade and navigation, must have the same effect upon that of Great-Britain, and, in all probability, PROVE HER RUIN.

F I N I S.

